

## A Word From Susie Stanley

Executive Director, WHWC, Intl.

The numbers are in. There were 559 registered participants at the 6th international "Come to the Water" conference in Cincinnati. This included 159 students. We represented 20 denominations. But, that doesn't begin to tell the story! Included in this issue of the newsletter are testimonies from some of the women in attendance. Also, the conference continues in the friendships that were made and renewed at the conference. Several women living in my area have been getting together for a monthly lunch for some time now. Last month, we rejoiced that a Missouri Synod Lutheran woman was allowed to speak in her church. This month, we shared in the joy of another woman's ordination. A whole row of us showed up to hear Rev. Dr. Nina Gunter preach when she visited central Pennsylvania last week. Nina has preached at one of our conferences and she generally gives the offering plea.

For those of you who were at the conference, I encourage you to get out your participant list and e-mail someone who lives near you. Maybe you could meet together when you're going to be traveling near one another's home. Or, if you weren't at the conference, check your phone book for other women clergy in your

town and get acquainted. You might be surprised at how much you have in common!

Plans are under way for the 2006 conference. Sometimes, people say that I must be relieved to have another conference behind me and they encourage me to enjoy the rest before planning for the next conference. Unfortunately, there's no rest! We're still paying the last of the bills but, at the Planning Board's request, I contacted a potential preacher last month to ask if she would be willing to preach for us at our 2006 conference. We had asked her if she could come in 2004 but her schedule was full. This time we wanted to ask her early and our efforts were rewarded. Colonel Margaret Hay, who was named the best preacher in England in 2001, has agreed to be with us in San Diego. This is yet another reason to start saving your money in order to be able to attend the conference! †

### Mission Statement

"The mission of Wesleyan/ Holiness Women Clergy is to equip and encourage divinely-called women in vocational ministry and professional leadership positions."

## Book Review

by Beverly Ivany, an author from Montreal, Quebec, and a member of the Salvation Army

### Holy Boldness: Women Preachers' Autobiographies and the Sanctified Self

written by Susie C. Stanley (University of Tennessee Press, 2002). Paperback \$18.00. Order through your local book store.

Wesleyan/Holiness women clergy have a rich heritage. This is true world-wide, and very much so in the United States of America. This richness, however, did not come easily. It took great perseverance and the strong determination of many women who paved the way for those who would follow. God called these women; Jesus gave them an example of Holy living; and the Holy Spirit sanctified them—empowering them to speak forth to societies and cultures that were, on the whole, contrary to their emergence as women in ministry.

The author of the above book had a vision to gather the autobiographies of various Wesleyan/Holiness women from our heritage, with the intention of gleaning

insight into their motivation and purpose for desperately wanting to reach out to the world around them for the cause of Christ.

Stanley begins with studying the writings of Madame Guyon of France (1648-1717), a model of Wesleyan/Holiness women. She then continues with examining the autobiographies of two English women who were contemporaries of Wesley: Mary Bosanquet Fletcher (1739-1815) and Hester Ann Rogers (1756-1794). Finally, she reviews the works of 34 American Wesleyan/Holiness women (five of which were women of colour). It is fascinating to read what each had to say from their own perspective, most living in the 19th century, and what personal challenges they faced as women of God.

What is revealed throughout the book sheds light on their struggles, the resistance they each faced, and their strong sense that, if they were truly called and

(continued on page 2)

## Book Review (continued from page 1)

sanctified, they had no choice but to obey and follow God's leading for their lives. For them, the "sanctified self" overcame all obstacles—for God was on their side.

Society tried, over and over again, to impose their restrictions and resistance against these women as preachers in the public arena. Yet all of these Wesleyan/Holiness women fought for what they thought was their divine calling upon their lives. They strongly believed that they had a right to speak out for their Lord. Their stories, their autobiographies, speak of their self-understanding and their empowerment to challenge the way the culture thought about women and their role in ministry.

The Wesleyan/ Holiness movement believes the Holy Spirit gifts both men and women for ministry within the church. Both can be ordained and fulfill God's mission. Yet many other churches and denominations did not (and still do not) agree with this interpretation of Scripture. Women involved in this movement, outlined in the autobiographies, faced definite barriers. There existed a perceived notion of what a woman's place was within the context of their homes. Unlike men, they had to justify their public ministry. Yet, despite all that worked against them, these women persisted, for they were given authority from on high. Holiness, for them, eliminated any gender (or even racial) prejudice.

Stanley often quotes from these extraordinary autobiographies, revealing personal struggles that give insight into what these women faced on a daily basis. But they still continued on because of their strong sense of self—again, this sanctified self—that was blessed of God. Rather than dwelling on their own concerns or difficulties, they saw the greater mission of winning souls for Christ. Their sanctification not only energized them, it drowned any sense of fear or incapability. They each had a true

sense of Holy Boldness, refusing to be paralyzed by societal barriers.

All of the women spoken of in the book faced certain hostility, often by those close to them. Yet they were brave, determined, driven, all because they knew, beyond doubt, that they were called by God. This is what gave them courage. They refused to be silenced, just because they were women. They became public figures: preaching, founding schools, founding churches and denominations, feeding the poor, evangelizing, pastoring, working with alcoholics and prostitutes. It was a social Gospel. For them, it became a revolutionary Gospel.

The women outlined in Holy Boldness each had a prophetic authority which enabled them to go forth and preach God's Word. This book is not only inspirational and encouraging for women today; it is a documented account of how God works through His people to reach out to a dying, desperate world. For those involved in the Wesleyan/ Holiness movement, for those involved in other Christian ministries, for men and women alike, reading this book will bring great insight and a fuller understanding of who we are as God's people, and the full potential available for each one of us as His children. †

### 2006 Come to the Water Conference

7th International WHWC Conference

April 20-23, 2006

Town and Country Resort, San Diego, CA

For further information, please contact  
Rev. Dr. Susie Stanley, Professor  
Messiah College, P.O. Box 4081, Grantham, PA 17027  
(717) 691-6021, x5911  
whwc@messiah.edu  
Web site: [www.messiah.edu/whwc](http://www.messiah.edu/whwc)

## 2005 Retreat for Women in Ministry and Leadership

Kenbrook Bible Camp, 190 Pine Meadow Road, Lebanon, PA 17046

Monday–Wednesday noon, March 14–16, 2005

Theme: Celebrating Our Stories

Keynote Speakers:

Anne Marie Griffith, Fort Erie, ON • Malia Meiser, Mechanicsburg, PA • Brenda Wagner, Leola, PA

- Nine Workshops: Women & Peace; The Red Tent: Telling the Story of Dinah; The Biblical Foundation for Women in Ministry and Leadership; Compassionate Ministry for Those Who Are Divorced, Single Parents, or Families with Children in Trouble; Ministering on Issues of Gender Identity; Single in Ministry: Handicap or Advantage?; Can You Be a Christian Feminist?; Perspectives That Shape the Acceptance of Women as Leaders; Women in Evangelism: Developing Relationships with Non-Believers

- Music and Prayer Ministries
- Networking, fellowship, inspiration, wonderful food, and relaxation
- Brochure at [www.equalworth.net/ministry](http://www.equalworth.net/ministry)

Contact Janet Peifer for more information  
([revjmp@equalworth.net](mailto:revjmp@equalworth.net); 717-259-5404)

Planned by a Brethren in Christ Committee  
Open to all women in ministry and leadership †

# Testimonials

from women who attended the 2004 Come to the Water Conference in Cincinnati, OH

The focus on Holy Boldness was timely. This conference is always relevant and spiritual. The networking opportunities are invaluable to me.

—Nina G. Gunter, Kansas City, MO

I came to the conference weary and confused. I had been struggling with the question of when to assert with boldness, if you will, and when to wait patiently for God to work in the hearts of those needing change. I'm not certain I actually received a direct answer. However! being in the company of hundreds of women with similar stories, and listening to some of the best preaching I've ever heard, spurred in me the strength of the Holy Spirit, to just speak plainly about my calling—to say, "Listen, this is what God is doing, and calling me to do. I have to." Upon returning, I talked with my Sr. Pastor in this way. He is now moving in support of my ministry and ordination (though, in very small steps—but, still moving). Praise God.

—Nicole Snyder, Hillsdale, MI

The networking session was most beneficial to me. I appreciated the chance to meet and visit with other pastors in similar circumstances. We shared the joy and pain, and offered encouragement and hope.

—Marlene Soffera, Hesperia, CA

One of the ladies who attended via support from the Southern Michigan Conference of the Free Methodist church emailed me to say this conference brought healing to the wounds made by a recent rejection of a local church because of her gender. She was reconfirmed in her call and recognized there were many others who faced the same wounds and remained faithful to see God's blessings in their lives.

Another woman emailed me to say the many conversations with new folks and workshops helped to diffuse the mystery of her call and the confusion others have placed upon it and gave her a greater sense of confidence to help others come to terms with her call.

As for me, I watched how several women who sensed God's call arrived hesitantly and bruised to return to their local churches with greater biblical confidence, renewed energy to continue the pursuit of their particular call and a strategy to help others come to terms with their call and new network of fellow women ministers. Also, upon our return and reports to our conference leadership, there came a unanimous vote of financial and collegial support for future clergy women's conferences! God has opened the door in the Southern Michigan Conference! I am filled with anticipation of the fruit of this event blossoming in the months and years ahead! This is success for me!

—Sheryl Colter, Monroe, MI

The conference was really good for me. My job in urban missions has caused me to miss the local church "community", and the conference provided a good shot in the arm in that regard. God used the weekend to reveal deep truth about some issues I have been struggling with, and I have been set free on several levels. It is too detailed to write out here, but trust me, it's all good! My spiritual journey is rich, and God is so faithful!

—Shirley Goodman, Frazer, PA

The WHWC Conference felt like a spring shower to my weary soul. My spiritual armor was beginning to feel a bit in need of repair, troddened down with discouragement. I felt the healing to my armor through God's grace and the wonderful fellowship and inspiring speakers. I knew there was lots of preparation and prayer that created such an inspiring event. The fellowship with other women on a similar journey was comforting as well as motivating. The conference stretched my mind beyond the normal "barriers" and created a place where dreams and visions occur, giving me greater confidence to take some steps of faith. I can't imagine missing this opportunity next time in San Diego.

—Marge Wolfe, Manheim, PA

The Come to the Water Conference was one of the highlights of my entire year. Through the conference, I was empowered as a woman in ministry and met lots of wonderful friends and mentors along the way. This conference has made me a better student and has also cemented my call to ministry! I am so happy that God has blessed us all with this wonderful tool and encouraging activity. Through this conference, I continually feel the support and love of a God who calls women to ministry and then brings us to an uplifting and God-filled experience!

—Julie Ann Ott, Senior at Messiah College

The timing of this conference could not have been better for me. Recently accepting a call to ministry as a co-pastor with my husband in a denomination where this is not the norm has been received well yet not without its challenges. I appreciated the workshops that I attended because they were all very practical to everyday ministry. What I particularly appreciated was the dialogue among other female pastors. I remember the "feeling," like it was yesterday, standing together singing praises to God thinking to myself, "thank you Lord for calling all these Godly women into your service". It's great to know I'm not the only woman out there called to serve God and His people in this way.

—Terry Rose, Harrisburg, PA

(Continued on page 4)

# The Planning Board

for the 2006 Come to the Water Conference

Please be in prayer for the board as they meet November 4-6, 2004, to plan the programming for the 2006 conference in San Diego, CA. If you are a member of a sponsoring denomination and would like to be considered as a workshop leader or serve in another capacity at the conference, please notify your board member. Pray especially that as many on the board are new, that they will quickly catch the vision and be able to utilize their gifts to enable a strong team effort for this important work. Why not pray for the board by name?

Rev. Joy L. Sherman  
Springfield, OH  
jsherman@maidenlane.org  
Church of God Representative

Rev. Sheryl Colter  
Monroe, MI  
rvbluejeans@aol.com  
Free Methodist Representative

Rev. Vicki Copp  
Chandler, AZ  
dvcoop@aol.com  
Church of the Nazarene Representative

Major Donna Hurula  
Alexandria, VA  
Donna\_Hurula@usn.salvationarmy.org  
Salvation Army Representative

Rev. Kim Fowler  
High Point, NC  
kdfpreacher@aol.com  
Wesleyan Church Representative

Rev. Dr. Dixie Yoder  
Hydro, OK  
revflash@direpc.com  
Brethren in Christ Representative

Pastor Duk Jae Lee  
Staten Island, NY  
718newhope@mail.com  
Korean Evangelical Holiness Church in America  
Representative

Evangelical Friends, Intl. Representation  
To be appointed.

Rev. Dr. Susie Stanley  
Grantham, PA  
whwc@messiah.edu  
Convener

Rev. Dr. Janet Peifer  
East Berlin, PA  
revjmp@equalworth.net  
Assistant Convener †

---

## Testimonials (continued from page 3)

To God be the glory, great things he has done. What a privilege to sit in the presence of more than 500 women and men to hear God's word shared in such a meaningful way. I was impressed that coming from a Holiness denomination afforded me with such a rich heritage. My prayer is that my generation will be able to pass that heritage on to the next.

—Dawn Spangler, New Cumberland, PA †

---

If you have announcements, news, articles or any other information you'd like to be included in this newsletter, please contact the editor,  
Rev. Dr. Janet Peifer  
revjmp@equalworth.net



Address Services Requested

WHWC, Intl.  
Messiah College  
PO Box 4081  
One College Avenue  
Grantham, PA 17027

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Grantham, PA 17027  
Permit No. 3